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ON PAGE 1

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## Used-Computer Firm Sells to Moscow, CIA And Disney World

But Dealer Sonny Monosson  
Is Gloomy About Future;  
How Sledgehammers Help

By ERIK LARSON

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BOSTON — In the upstairs offices of American Used Computer Co., just about everything is secondhand.

Old computer pedestals and cabinets that once housed the ultimate in American technology now serve as bookshelves. Gears from old computer disk drives now are paperweights. A metal bar once used to conduct electricity through a computer now props up a scraggly philodendron.

One of the few brand-new things is a small printer made by Wang Laboratories Inc. "It broke my heart to buy it," says Sonny Monosson, the boss around here, wearing his maroon suspenders and an orange paisley bow tie, one of the more than 150 bow ties he owns. "But we couldn't find a used one."

Sonny Monosson, actually Adolf F. Monosson, 56 years old, is a used-computer dealer. He was hawking secondhand computers as early as 1969, when most people were just getting accustomed to the new machines and few knew you could buy the things used. To peddle his cut-rate wares, he wore sandwich boards at new-computer shows until the shows' organizers sent armed lawmen to stop him.

### Bikini and Tie

He gave up that practice in 1979 but still attracts attention. Once at a staid finance convention he appeared among the lounging bankers at poolside in a men's bikini bathing suit and a bow tie. "You've seen my stomach," he says of his roundish physique. "I figured with a bright-red bow tie they wouldn't notice it."

Mr. Monosson is also known for his gloomy outlook on the used-computer business. Although business is good now, advancing technology soon will drive prices of new computers so low that nobody will buy a used one, he says. Already a circuit board that cost \$2,000 new in 1976 is just about worthless. "Would you go out and buy a used car if a new car were selling for half the cost?" he asks.

American Used Computer typically does most of its business over the telephone, selling machines to the

likes of Harvard University, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Russians, Walt Disney World, and even an eight-year-old boy who happened to have \$1,200 to plunk down on a computer.

The boy aside, customers usually have an old system that works and need parts or backup systems.

They know that if they buy the newest machines, they could wind up spending millions to convert their existing programs.



Sonny Monosson

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EXCERPTED